

**Testimony of New York State Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick
and New York State Senator Brad Hoylman
Before the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals
Regarding Calendar Number 298-12-BA, 726-730 Broadway**

January 8, 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. We have many concerns regarding the application filed by New York University (NYU) for a variance (§72-21), which is before the Board of Standards and Appeals (298-12-BZ) to convert current administrative space into academic space at 726-730 Broadway.

The variance would permit the conversion of nine floors of an existing ten-story building to Use Group 3 for college and university use. The stated goal of this conversion is to alter the zoning to allow for multiple floors of this building to be converted into research and teaching laboratory space. It would also add associated mechanicals on the roof, the tallest of which is 35 feet tall. The Landmarks Preservation Commission would have to review and approve these changes as well, as it is in a landmark district.

We appreciate that NYU has worked with the NoHo Bowery Stakeholders, Inc. to limit the impact of this proposed change on the surrounding community. We also understand the fear some stakeholders have expressed that if NYU is not allowed to move forward with this plan with the agreed upon restrictions, the university could repurpose the space under the existing zoning. However, a future threat does not justify a use group change.

While we appreciate that the concessions negotiated were made in good faith in the interests of the NoHo neighborhood, they do not address our fundamental issues with this application. First, the proposed mechanicals on the roof are of a significant size, rising almost an additional 4 stories on top of a building that is part of a relatively contiguous block. Additionally, this building is located in the NoHo Historic District, and the introduction of these mechanicals, which would be visible from the street, would be a blight on this historic neighborhood. Furthermore, we have difficulty comprehending how NYU has an outstanding need for more academic space. Just a few months ago, the university went before the City Council and defended its ULURP application for massive overdevelopment in Washington Square Village by saying the Core Proposal, which does not include 726-730 Broadway, would meet all of their academic needs for decades to come. Yet, even before breaking ground on the recently approved 1.6 million gross square feet of new academic and faculty space, NYU is before the BSA asking for an additional expansion.

This application would not only alter the historic nature of the neighborhood, through the introduction of the 4 stories of mechanicals on roof, but also would introduce masses of students to the east side of Broadway. These additional students would place an undue burden on the community, and would fundamentally change the composition of this already congested neighborhood. On December 20th, the Community Board unanimously voted in opposition of this proposal for many of the same reasons we outline above.

We believe the community has already made more than enough sacrifices and compromises for NYU, and do not believe they need to encroach even farther east, or develop higher on their buildings. I urge you to deny this application. Thank you for your attention to this matter.